(d) what steps are being taken by India to firm up its claim?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH):(a) to (d) India's claim for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council has been taken up at the appropriate level with various countries in the UN or in bilateral exchanges. The response has been encouraging and a large number of countries, including some permanent members of the Council, have expressed support for India's candidature. The US is among countries that have not officially taken a firm position on the question of Security Council expansion. India will continue its efforts to secure support from as many countries as possible.

Inter-Ministerial Committee to review passport issuance procedure

3088. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have constituted Inter-Ministerial Committee to review the system of issue passports and simplifying it;

(b) whether it has submitted its report; if so, the details thereof and action taken thereon;

(c) whether registration of Adoption Deed is mandatory for the passport of adopted child;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor along with the rule/provision in this regard;

(e) whether the said Committee considered this provision; and

(f) the details regarding applications received in May, 2003 in Delhi for passport of adopted minors, passport issued, representation received from non-issuance of passport till date and the action taken on such representations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) The Committee on Review of Passport Issue System was set up in March, 2001 and submitted its

report on 21.9.2001. The Committee, *inter-alia*, recommended simplification of procedures, decentralization, technological upgradation and introduction of an efficient public information, facilitation and grievance redressal mechanism. The action taken on the recommendations of the Committee is given in statement (see below).

(c) and (d) As per para 2.2.1. of Chapter X of Passport Manual 2001, registration of adopted deed is mandatory for the passport of adopted child if the adoptive parents and child to be adopted are Hindus. In respect of children adopted by foreign parents, the court order granting guardianship and allowing the child to be taken out of India is requested before issue of a passport.

(e) No.

(f) 15 applications were received by Regional Passport Office Delhi and passports were issued in 14 cases. In one case representation was received and passport was not issued because the applicant has not yet furnished the required documents.

Statement

Action taken on Implementation of the Recommendations in the Report of the Committee on Review of the Passport Issue System

Sl. No.	Points	Implementation Status
1.	The Passport application form may be drastically simplified to avoid redundant and repetitive information. A revised format for the purpose has been suggested by the Committee and is enclosed at ANNEXURE-II of the Report.(Paragraph 5.2.2)	The revised form has been finalized and is being translated into Hindi for bilingual printing. The revised form would be of 3-4 pages as compared to 9 pages in the current form and a duplicate copy would be used for police verification. Guidlines for filling up the form would be printed in Hindi, English and regional languages also.
2.	All applications should be acknowledged through a pres-	This recommendation has been accepted. However it is felt that

Sl. No.	Points	Implementation Status
	cribed receipt-cum-checklist which would clearly specify the documents received and also indicate the tentative date of issue of the passport. Acknowledgement receipts and case files of the passport. Acknowledgement receipts and case files should bear the same number. All applications should be carefully scrutinized before their acceptance. (Paragraph 5.3)	once a receipt is given to the applicant by the counter official, it is assumed that the form, has been thoroughly scrutinized and that the form is complete in all respects, including all enclosures. The person at the counter would be held responsible for any shortcomings. The scrutiny at the counters has been strengthened and the passport of officials have been suitably sensitized to the importance of proper scrutiny.
3.	At the Regional Passport Offices, the passport fee should also be accepted through credit cards. (Paragraph 5.4)	The Chief Controller of Accounts, Ministry of External Affairs has informed that as per Government rules the payments can be accepted only through cash or bank drafts and this practice is being followed by Passport Offices at present. Hence the proposal of accepting fee through credit cards cannot be accepted.
4.	The functions of the receipt and scrutiny of passport applications should be decentralized to the District level where a District Passport Cell (DPC) either under the District Magistrate (DM) or the Superintendent of Police (SP) may be authorized to perform these functions. This arrangement should be put in place only after proper training to the identified personnel of dis-	This is already under implementation. The then Minister of State, Shri Omar Abdullah, took a meeting of Chief Secretaries/Directors General of Police of all States on 23rd Nov., 2001, wherein a decision was taken to launch the decentralization scheme at the district level with effect from 15.1.2002. It has also been decided to reimburse an amount of Rupees 200/- per ap-

Sl. No.	Points	Implementation Status
	trict offices has been imparted. (Paragraph 5.5.2)	plication form to the States to enable them to meet infrastructure and other related expenses. Training of Personnel of the District Offices (SP or DM's office as the case may be) has already commenced in almost all states and has been completed in most of them. Secretary (PCD) took a meeting with the nodal officers of all the States on June 20, 2002 and all the States were requested to launch this scheme by end-July, 2002. The scheme has been launched in 360 districts of the country thus covering more than half of the districts in the country. As of now, partly or fully, all States have implemented the decentralisation scheme except the States of Goa, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Uttaranchal and West Bengal. Goa being a small state with only two districts has decided not to set up DPCs as their needs are fully addressed by a full-fledged Passport Office in Panaji. The State Government of Karnataka has decided to implement the scheme w.e.f. 1.9.2003. However there is no indication yet from the State Governments of Rajasthan, Uttaranchal and West Bengal as to the date of implementation of the scheme.

Sl. No.	Points	Implementation Status
		None of the seven Union Territories (which include Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Delhi, Lakshdweep and Pondicherry) has District Passport Cells (DPC). While Andaman has a passport unit functioning from the UT Secretariat, Chandigarh & Delhi have dedicated Regional Passport Offices. However, Govt. of Delhi has agreed to introduce the scheme shortly. The UT of Pondicherry has a PACC. Other Union Territories have a small population of passport applicants and hence did not feel the need to introduce the scheme.
5.	For the reasons explained in the report, the Committee prefers that the DM's office should be the nodal office for receipt, scrutiny and dispatch of passport applications. However, a final decision as to whether this task should be performed by District Magistrates or Superintendents of Police in a particular state should appropriately determined by the State Government concerned. (Paragraph 5.5.3 & 5.5.4).	MEA accepted this recommendation and it has been implemented. It has been left to the States to decide whether to accept the applications at DM's office or SP's office.
6.	In Districts, where the number of passport applications is more	This is already under implementation and the scheme has al-

Sl. No.	Points	Implementation Status
	than 10,000 in a year, a dedicated District Passport Cell (DPC) should be set up under the Additional District Magistrate (ADM)/City Magistrate/Sub Divisional Magistrate Head Quarters with the requisite supporting staff. The expenditure on this cell can be met by the MEA out of a suitably enhanced provision in their budget, which would be feasible due to an increase in the passport fee being suggested in this report. In other Districts, where the volume of work is lower, certain trained officials could be assigned the work of receiving, scrutinizing and dispatching passport applications and the officer-in-charge of the work can be designated as the Nodal Officer for passports. In the Committee's view, Ministry of External Affairs should reimburse an amount of Rs. 200 per completed and verified application form, through its budget, which should be possible with the enhanced passport fee of Rs. 1000. (Paragraph 5.5.5 & 5.5.6)	eady been launched in 23 States. Other States are also expected to follow soon. It has been decided that MEA would reimburse an amount of Rs. 200 to the State Govt. per completed and verified application form with effect from 15th January, 2002. The passport fee has been revised with effect from April 1, 2002.
7.	The passport application submitted at the District Head Quarters could be locally verified by the District authori-	Is being implemented by all the District Passport Cells that have been set up.

Sl. No.	Points	Implementation Status
	ties and police administration and thereafter, forwarded to the Passport Office for further processing. Such an arrangement will greatly reduce the congestion at the passport offices and save considerable time that is lost in communication. (Paragraph 5.7)	
8.	In order to provide greater public choice as also to foster competition between different public service providers, the receipt and scrutiny of passport applications may also be decentralized at the level of Speed Post Collection offices. They should serve as an additional channel at the local level. The detailed procedure recommended for the purpose, is described in the Report. The Committee has recommended that service through the National Speed Post Offices (SPO) may be increased from 23 at present to 120 National SPO by December 2001. (Paragraph 5.8.1 & 5.8.2)	Passport applications can be deposited at 120 Speed Post Centres in the country apart from Passport Offices, Passport application Collection Centres and District Passport Cells. Action is underway to ensure that this service is extended to all the Speed Post Centres in the country.
9.	Miscellaneous services should be provided across the counter by an authorized group of officials headed by a Passport Issuing Authority. [Paragraph 5.12.3(b)]	Fourteen Passport Offices are already providing, miscellaneous services like change of ladies name after marriage, change of address, ECNR status, issue of Police Clearance Certificate etc. across the counter. This will be implemented in all the Passport Offices.

Sl. No.	Points	Implementation Status
10.	Ministry of External Affairs should redesign the work flow and set time norms for movement of passport applications so that it takes a maximum of one week to process and issue a passport, excluding the time taken for verification of citizenship and character. In place of the present specialized sections, composite work groups should be set up. In order to ensure timely processing of applications received by Passport Offices from the Speed Post Offices/District Passport Cells, there should be separate composite work group(s) to process applications received directly by Passport Offices and those from Speed Post Offices/ District Passport Cells. [Paragraph 5.12.3(c)]	The receipt of applications with police verification reports from District Passport Cells has not yet stabilized. Accordingly special cells have not been set up. Nevertheless passport offices have been sensitized to expeditiously dispose of applications received from District Passport Cells and Speed Post Centres.
11.	The present system of both manual and electronic processing should be dispensed with in favour of only electronic processing. Passport Issuing Officer should authorize the issue of a passport on the computer itself. [Paragraph 5.12.3(d)]	All Passport Offices have been computerized and grant orders for issue of passports are issued electronically. However to verify the authenticity of documents like Birth Certificates, Graduation Certificates and Address Proof Documents, passport application files are continued to be retained in hard copy till passport is granted.
12.	Ministry of External Affairs should encourage Banks to open extension counters in passport offices. [Paragraph 5.12.3(e)]	Due to space constraints these cannot be opened in existing Passport Offices. However space for extension counters will be included in all proposals for new passport offices. MEA will

Sl. No.	Points	Implementation Status
		consult the Controller of Accounts regarding the modality for opening of extension counters and the exact nature of the work to be entrusted to the extension counters as well as for selection of banks.
13.	Ministry of External Affairs should ensure connectivity among Passport Offices which would be linked to a Central Computer that maintains an All-India Data Base and permits on-line access to all Passport Offices in the country. (Paragraph 5.12.6)	The Index cards in the passport offices have been scanned and a Central Database of the same is maintained in NIC. The process of scanning the passport application files would be completed by end of 2004. The files after s canning would be loaded on the Database. All Passport Offices have email connectivity with NIC.Hyderabad, Bangalore and Delhi have RF connectivity and Chandigarh would be provided the same in their new office. Provision of ISDN facilities for Passport Offices is being looked into where RF connectivity is not there. The security concerns of access to the Central Database is being finalized. Once these concerns are adressed all Passport Offices and our missions abroad would have access to the Database for easier and prompt verification of passport particulars in reissue of passports/issue of duplicate passports and in confirmation of passport particulars of Indian nationals stranded abroad. A number of test runs of the Central Database have been carried out successfully.

Sl. No.	Points	Implementation Status
14.	MEA should move towards a system of identifying an applicant on the basis of the thumb impression. (Paragraph 5.16)	The proposal for conversion of all handwritten passports to machine printed passports is being discussed with Ministry of Home Affairs and concerned security agencies. In this context it is proposed that thumb and index finger prints would be obtained of all passport applicants. It is expected that the scheme would be operational when all passport offices are provided with machine printers. Similar action would be taken by missions/posts abroad for Indians living in foreign countries having hand written passports. In this regard discussions have been held with some vendors for supply of finger print technology.
15.	Every passport issued by the Government of India should be machine-readable. (Paragraph 5.17)	It is already under implementation. Machine-readable passports are being issued by all Passport Offices.
16.	Ministry of External Affairs should set up centers of excellence in the 5 Metros beginning with New Delhi (Paragraph 5.18)	The modality of its implementation is being examined
17.	Provisions of section 6 of the Indian Passport Act, 1967 may be examined afresh, to see if they require any amendment. In any case, guidelines regarding what would constitute "moral turpitude" as mentioned in section 6(2)(e) should be issued.	The Supreme Court has given a ruling regarding the interpretation of moral turpitude. The issue is being examined.

Sl. No.	Points	Implementation Status
	Review of provisions contained in section 6(2)(e), 6(2)(f) and 6(2)(g) should be undertaken by MEA along with those of section 10 of the Indian Passport Act in consultation with the Ministry of Law. (Paragraph 5.19.1 & 5.19.2)	
18.	The Minimum punishment under section 12 of the Indian Passports Act for deliberately furnishing false information in the form should be three months' imprisonment. (Paragraph 5.19.3)	Fines are imposed in all such cases at present. However, it is not feasible to prosecute such persons in a court of law due to shortage of staff and lack of legal expertise in Passport Offices.
19.	Selected cases of Malpractices by applicants should be vigorously pursued for conviction and penal action to ensure a deterrent effect. For this purpose, legal retainers could be provided to select passport offices for legal advice and for pursuing serious cases in the concerned courts. (Paragraph 5.19.4)	All Passport Issuing Authorities are empowered to impound/revoke passports in case of Malpractices as well as impose penalty Malpractices as well as impose penalty between Rs. 500 to Rs. 5000/- particularly where the applicant fails to provide satisfactory explanation. In cases where clarifications are required the matter is referred to the L&T Division of the Ministry for advice. Agencies such as Police & CBI also handle cases of Malpractices by the applicants.
20.	Where despite computerization, work process re-engineering and simplification of procedures, system overload persists, staff should be suitably augmented. (Paragraph 5.25.1)	With the increase in computerization and modernization a new office procedure is being evolved. At the same time the Passport Offices are being inspected regularly with a view to evolve new

Sl. No.	Points	Implementation Status
		SIU norms. Efforts are being made to finalize the new office procedure within the current year.
21.	MEA should, after seeking professional advice, fix individual productivity norms and introduce a productivity-linked incentive scheme for the passport office staff. (Paragraph 5.25.2 & 5.25.3)	In view of the new office procedure and SIU norms being evolved productivity linked incentive scheme is not being implemented.
22.	MEA should plan construction of transit hostels in big cities and residential colonies in their work places for the employees of passport offices (Paragraph 5.25.4)	Residential quarters are also being built in the construction projects of Passport Offices. MEA has also written to the Chief Secretaries for providing residential quarters to the CPO staff. Further, assistance from Cabinet Secretariat may be required in this regard. There is no real need for transit hostels. Moreover, CNE has on earlier occasions turned down requests for construction of transit hostels. As staff at Group 'D' level (Record sorter, Peon, Sweeper, Night watchman) are recruited locally & have their own accommodation provision of staff quarters for Group 'D' is not being made. Moreover, Group 'D' staff is generally not transferred.
23.	New passport offices may be opened in capitals of the two newly formed States namely at Dehradun and Raipur, in addition to Simla and Surat. (Paragraph 5.25.5)	Renting proposal for Passport Office Dehradun is in progress. A team has been sent to Dehradun to examine the offers together with the local CPWD. For Passport Office Raipur a building was selected.

Sl. No.	Points	Implementation Status
		However the offer was withdrawn due to the non-finalization of Fair Rent Certificate by CPWD. A letter is being sent from Minister of State, Ministry of External Affairs to Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh for a fresh offer from the Government of Chhattisgarh.
		Financial approval for renting of building for passport office at Surat has been obtained and the office is expected to start functioning by August 2003.
		Financial approval is being sought for renting of office building for Passport Office Simla.

As on 13-8-2003

Contracts to Indian companies in Iraq

3089. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MISS MABEL REBELLO:
SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of contracts bagged by the Indian firms in the reconstruction process in Iraq either through Permanent Mission of India, New York or otherwise, if any, including the value of these contracts and the names of the companies; and

(b) whether any office has also been set up in Iraq to help our companies to bag the work jobs, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Indian business delegations, under apex trade bodies like FICCI and CII have visited Iraq/other relevant countries to explore possibilities of securing contracts for post war